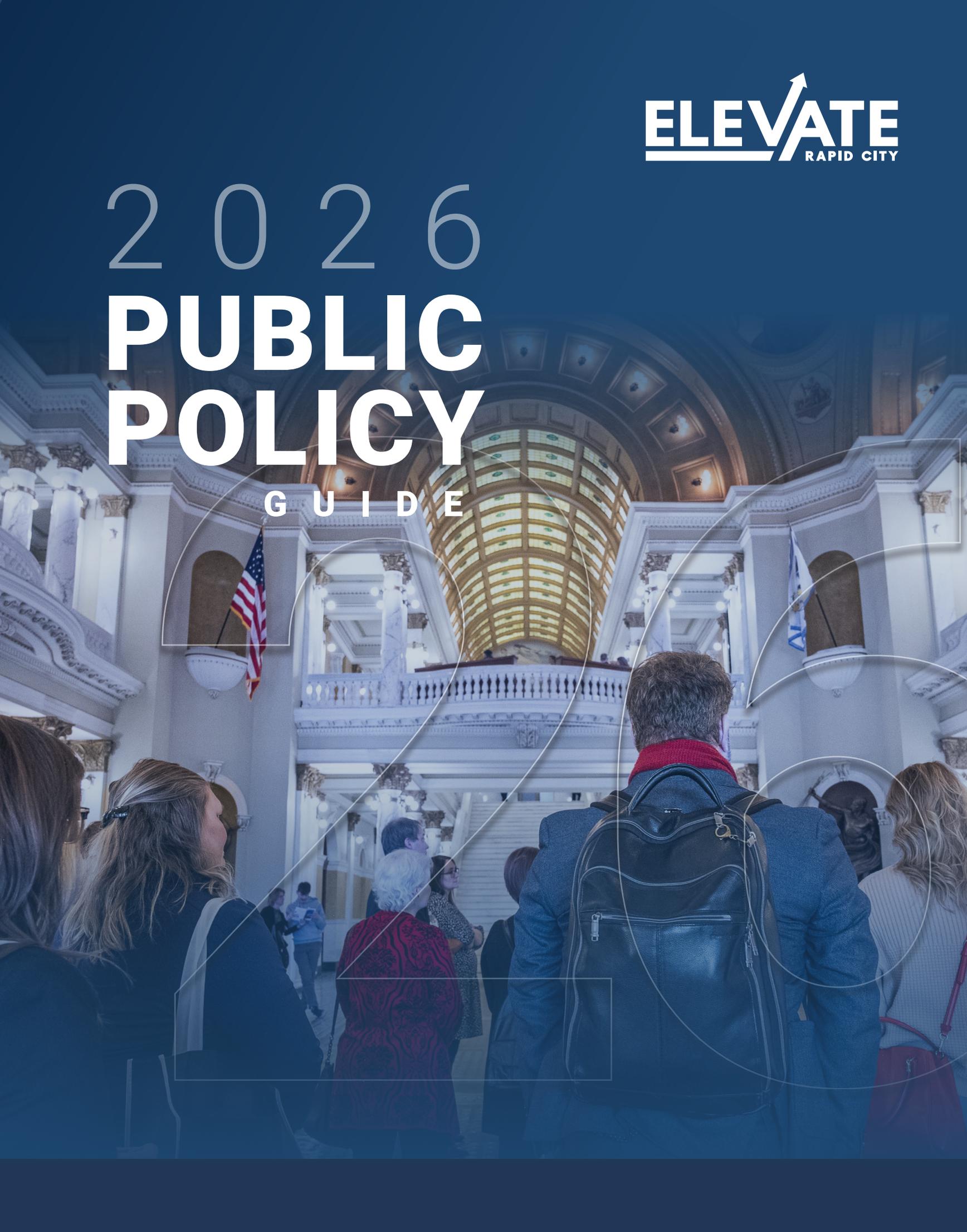


2026 PUBLIC POLICY GUIDE



MISSION
**ELEVATE THE
 RAPID CITY
 ECONOMY
 FOR ALL**



VISION
**RAPID CITY
 IS THE
 PLACE PEOPLE
 WANT TO BE**

FIVE YEAR GOALS

HERE IS WHERE WE CURRENTLY
 STAND 2023 - 2027 GOALS.
Info updated on December 5, 2025

**LABOR FORCE
 PARTICIPATION >
 NATIONAL AVERAGE**

GOAL ACCOMPLISHED

67.2%

NATIONAL AVERAGE 62.68%
Source: US Bureau of Labor Statistics

**CREATE
 5,000 JOBS**

GOAL ACCOMPLISHED

7,231 JOBS

TOTAL EMPLOYED
January 2023: 74,169
August 2025: 81,400
Source: US Bureau of Labor Statistics

**INCREASE
 INCOMES BY 15%**

GOAL IN PROGRESS

12.37%

CHANGE IN WAGES
January 2018: \$858
August 2025: \$1,015
Source: US Bureau of Labor Statistics

**\$51 BILLION
 IN GROSS SALES**

GOAL IN PROGRESS

\$27.8 BILLION

January 2018 - December 2022: \$38.4 Billion
January 2023 - October 2025: \$27.8 Billion
Source: US Department of Revenue

**\$2 BILLION IN CAPITAL
 EXPENDITURES**

GOAL IN PROGRESS

\$1.2 BILLION

January 2018 - December 2022: \$1.87 Billion
January 2023 - October 2025: \$1.2 Billion
Source: Rapid City Building Permits

ELEVATE RAPID CITY EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Tom Weaver, Chair // Dacotah Bank

Marne Jones, Vice Chair // Black Hills Energy

Todd Kenner, Treasurer // RESPEC

Alan Solano, Secretary // Monument Health

Paulette Davidson, Past Chair // Monument Health

Mayor Jason Salamun // City of Rapid City

Kyle Wiese // Black Hills Surgical Hospital

Jacqui Dietrich // John T. Vucurevich Foundation

Steve Vlk // Marsh & McLennan Agency (MMA)

Andy Bartling // Modern Woodmen of America

Larry Oswald // Montana Dakota Utilities

Holly Lien // Pete Lien & Sons

Erika Batcheller // Sanford Health

Robert Raker // West River Electric

SENIOR PUBLIC POLICY DIRECTOR

GARTH WADSWORTH

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605.718.8460

HOUSING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT MANAGER

LAURA JONES

laura.jones@elevaterapidcity.com

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ELEVATE RAPID CITY

Elevate Rapid City was established in 2019, merging the Chamber of Commerce and Economic Development organizations to lead the small business and economic development efforts in the Black Hills. We work to elevate the Rapid City economy for all, with the vision of making the Black Hills the place people want to be.

Elevate Rapid City is committed to promoting and advocating for business and quality growth in western South Dakota with a focus on jobs, infrastructure, and overall quality of life in and around the Black Hills region and Rapid City metro area.

PILLAR OBJECTIVES

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Support results-oriented programs that attract and grow industry, create a skilled workforce, and encourage cooperative public and private efforts to promote the growth and attraction of businesses to the Black Hills area. Support the responsible use of flexible economic development tools to increase the competitiveness of the region and address the needs of the community.

INNOVATION

Support policies that address commercialization, research, funding, and collaboration among the private and public sectors to further develop the state's value chain from concept to market.

ENTREPRENEURSHIP & SMALL BUSINESS

Support policies that encourage entrepreneurship and support the growth of small businesses in all sectors.

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AND ATTRACTION

Support workforce development programs that both enhance and retain the current workforce and attract new talent.

2026 PUBLIC POLICY COMMITTEE MEMBERS

John Way
Chairman

Patri Acevedo Fuentes
Joseph David Associates LLC

Dean Aurand
Mid Continent Testing Labs, Inc

Andy Bartling
Modern Woodmen of America

Brad Curtis
Highmark Federal Credit Union

Kitty Kinsman
The K Group

Jason Lambert
Monument Health

Katie LeClair
KAL Information Services

Chris Long
Keller Williams Realty Black Hills

Callie Meyer
Visit Rapid City

Debra Owen
Black Hills Energy

Jeff Partridge
Partridge Financial

Talbot Wieczorek
Gunderson, Palmer, Nelson,
and Ashmore

PUBLIC POLICY COMMITTEE

Elevate's public policy work is rooted in our commitment to business advocacy and quality growth for our region. Elevate strives to impact all levels of government to advance sound public policy and promote a stable environment for our business community to flourish. We believe that investing time and resources to establish a strong presence within political and government processes is an investment made on behalf of Elevate's stakeholders and the community. Elevate utilizes the **Public Policy Committee (PPC)** to advise on public policy issues and priorities including state legislation, ballot initiatives, city and county proposals, and other community issues that impact economic development and the livelihood of Black Hills businesses. These members of our community are committed to preserving the business climate with an emphasis on strategic growth and quality of life.



CORE INDUSTRIES

AGRICULTURE

Advocate for equitable policies that support the sustainability and growth of agricultural producers and related industries.

MILITARY

Support the continued viability and growth of the military installations in our region as an effective deterrent to global conflict. We support military members and advocate for policies that honor their commitment to our country.

Support the cooperative initiatives of local, state, and federal leaders to ensure that Ellsworth Air Force Base is retained as a viable component of our nation's military capabilities.

NATURAL RESOURCES

Support responsible and proactive management and stewardship of our natural resources to sustain long-term health and resiliency. The natural resources of the Black Hills are one of our region's greatest economic assets supporting thriving industries, tourism, and enhancing quality of life for our community.

TOURISM & RETAIL

Advocate for policies that grow and protect the tourism, hospitality, and the retail industries.

HEALTHCARE

Support the continued growth of Rapid City as a regional healthcare hub and service provider throughout the Great Plains.

PRIORITY GROWTH SECTORS

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

Prioritize strategies to develop future industries that align with the local talent pipeline and regional specializations.

ADVANCED MANUFACTURING

Expand opportunities to attract and foster advanced manufacturing businesses and facilities.

RESEARCH, PROFESSIONAL & ENGINEERING SERVICES

Leverage the current talent pipeline and regional connections to develop a service hub, attract headquarters, and grow satellite offices.

DEFENSE TECH

Leverage proximity to the Ellsworth Air Force Base and Camp Rapid, as well as existing research and institutional capacity to foster a Defense Tech cluster and supporting manufacturing sector.



KEY POLICY AREAS

EDUCATION

Support education for individuals of all ages as a vital component of a strong local economy. Support collaborative partnerships among educational institutions, businesses, and other employers to prepare all students to compete in a global economy.

ENERGY

Support secure, reliable, and affordable energy development and distribution. Support a regulatory environment that promotes the production and development of sustainable, cost-effective energy.

OPPORTUNITY

Support a diverse and inclusive workforce by encouraging programs and policies that ensure everyone has access to the services necessary to engage in the workforce.

GOVERNMENT

Support responsible, efficient and effective government and public institutions that operate in a transparent, accountable, and fiscally responsible manner.

HEALTHCARE

Support policies that enable employers to hire and retain a healthy and productive workforce. Support quality and affordable healthcare for employees and their families to promote a strong local economy.

REGULATION AND TAXATION

Support a regulatory environment and responsible tax policy that attracts business development and growth while generating funds necessary to support essential government services.

HOUSING

Support innovative efforts and partnerships geared toward the development of affordable home ownership and rental opportunities for our growing workforce and community.

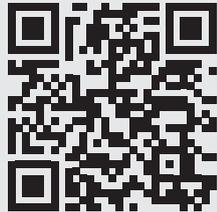
INFRASTRUCTURE

Support the responsible use of funding and tax policy to meet the growing demands of local infrastructure needs. Support programs that assist in the construction, planning, and maintenance of all types of infrastructure including transportation, water, sewer, and communication networks, among others.



The SD Legislative Research Council and My LRC+ website provide regular updates on bill drafts, votes, meetings, and agendas. These are great tools to stay up-to-date on issues and bills you are tracking.





Elevate wants to empower the Black Hills business community to find their voice in advocating for issues that impact their business. Throughout the months of January, February, and March, Elevate has a full-time presence in Pierre for the Legislative Session advocating on your behalf.

To stay plugged in on what's happening at the Legislature, sign up for our weekly newsletter, the Government Affairs Connection: elevaterapidcity.com/forms/email-sign-up/

LEGISLATIVE TERMS

41st DAY

A non-existent day of the legislative session; effectively killing a bill.

AMENDMENT

Any alteration made or proposed in a bill, motion, or clause thereof by adding, changing, substituting, or omitting.

APPROPRIATION

Money set apart by formal action for a specific use.

BILL

A proposed law introduced during a session for consideration by the Legislature.

CAUCUS

House and Senate members of the same political party or faction meet as a "caucus" to elect leadership and discuss political priorities.

COMMITTEES

Subunits formed in each of the houses which take public testimony and vote on bills usually on related subjects.

CONSENT CALENDAR

Schedule of bills on which there is general agreement that opposition is not anticipated.

CONSTITUENT

A citizen residing within the district of a legislator.

HOGHOUSE

A procedure occasionally used in the Legislature whereby a committee or a member from the floor will move to strike everything after the enacting clause of a bill and insert the substance of an entirely new bill.

LAY ON THE TABLE – "tabled"

To postpone a matter before the Legislature; may later be brought up for consideration by motion from the floor.

LRC

LRC refers to the Legislative Research Council. The LRC staff provide nonpartisan legal and fiscal analysis and assist with research, drafting, and budget services.

LOBBYIST

An individual engaged to present and promote the views of a group, organization, or industry on measures under consideration by legislators.

RECESS

A temporary pause in the proceedings.

SMOKE OUT

Invoking of Joint Rule 7-7 whereby one-third of the members of a house can require a committee to deliver a bill to the full body by the next legislative day.

VETO

Formal disapproval of a measure by the Governor.

GET INVOLVED

RAPID CITY LEGISLATIVE CRACKERBARRELS

Crackerbarrel events provide the community with an opportunity to hear directly from Rapid City area legislators and ask questions concerning legislative issues. Elevate Rapid City will continue the tradition of hosting several Legislative Crackerbarrels during the South Dakota Legislature's Annual Session beginning in January and concluding in March.

Members of the public are encouraged to attend. Bring your questions about legislative bills or issues to submit to a panel of Representatives and Senators from Districts 30, 32, 33, 34, and 35.

RAPID CITY COUNCIL PUBLIC MEETINGS

The City Council meets the first and third Monday of every month, beginning at 6:30 PM in the Council Chambers.

City Hall
300 6th Street
Rapid City, SD 57701
605-394-9300
www.rcgov.org

PENNINGTON COUNTY COMMISSION PUBLIC MEETINGS

The Pennington County Board of Commissioners meets on the first and third Tuesday of each month, beginning at 9:00 AM in the Commission Chambers on the first floor of the Pennington County Administration Building.

Pennington County Administration Building
900 Concourse Dr.
Rapid City, SD 57703
605.394.2171
www.pennco.org

RAPID CITY AREA SCHOOLS PUBLIC MEETINGS

The Rapid City Area Schools Board of Education meets on the first and third Tuesday of each month, beginning at 5:30 PM at the Rapid City Area Education Center.

Rapid City Education Center
625 9th St.
Rapid City, SD 57701
605.394.4031
www.rcas.org

LEGISLATIVE SCORECARD PROCESS

Elevate Rapid City releases a Legislative Scorecard following the close of the legislative session. The tracking document serves as a valuable accountability tool to help our businesses and community understand the positions of our local legislators.

As Elevate continues to advocate for more opportunities that provide direct benefit to our regional economic environment, we want to celebrate the political leaders who help make it happen. Equally important, Elevate commits to protect our business owners from policies that may hinder future success, growth, and opportunity.

Want to ensure a bill or issue that is on your radar makes it to the PPC for review? Visit our online public policy form to share your thoughts. Elevate's Public Policy Director will reach out to have a conversation about the topics you care about most. have a conversation about the topics you care about most.

WHAT WE DO

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & DIVERSITY

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- Business Attraction
- Business Expansion
- Business Retention
- Assist with Licensing/Permits
- Community Marketing
- Financing/Loans
- Downtown Façade Loan Program
- Incentives
- Site Development
- Business Events & Training
- SD Trade Partnership
- Economic Indicators
- Market Research:
 - Analytics
 - Labor Market
 - Competitor Analysis

ENTREPRENEURSHIP & INNOVATION

- Incubation
- Technical Assistance
- Facilitate Capital Formation
- Start-Up Support
- Incentives
- Mentor Networks
- Market Research:
 - Projections
 - Industry Comps
 - Industry Research
- Funding: Black Hills Angels
- Funding: Wildfire Labs

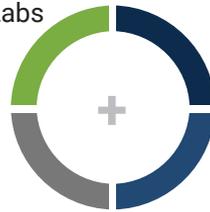
WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT & PARTNERSHIPS

MILITARY AFFAIRS

- Funding: SDEDA
- Support: BHM MAC
- Service Member Connection/Retention:
 - *Jobs*
 - *Spouse Employment*
 - *Business Start-Up*
 - *Quality of Life*
 - *Relocation Support*
- SkillBridge Program
- Military Spouse Professional Network
- Thrive Guide

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

- Labor Market Analytics/Wage Studies
- Training & Upskilling Grant
- Build Dakota Grant
- Talent Attraction
- Education: Pathways
- Workforce Engagement Strategies
- Elevate Job Board
- Direct Employer Assistance



ADVOCACY & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

ADVOCACY, ANALYTICS, & QUALITY GROWTH

- Public Policy
- Business Advocacy
- Quality Growth
- Housing
- Infrastructure
- Crackerbarrels
- Advocacy Scorecard
- Strategic Planning
- Innovation District
 - Mentor Networks
- Market Research:
 - Analytics
 - Housing Market
 - Real Estate Analysis

ELEVATE FOUNDATION

- Program Development
- Grant Writing
- Program Funding
- Community Investment
- Policy Institute

ORGANIZATIONAL GROWTH & DEVELOPMENT

SMALL BUSINESS INVESTOR RELATIONS

- Market Research
- Downtown Façade Loan Program
- Mixers
- Events
- Luncheons
- Investor Benefits
- Leadership Institute
- Young Professionals

COMMUNICATIONS & MARKETING

- Marketing & PR
- Social Media Marketing
- Newsletter
- Email
- Freedom Works
- Come Home Campaign
- Rapid City Business Journal
 - *Elevate Magazine*
 - *Online News*
 - *Podcast*

EXECUTIVE OPERATIONS

- Fundraising
- Strategy
- Board Management & Governance
- Accounting
- Human Relations
- IT
- Facilities

101ST LEGISLATIVE SESSION: KEY DATES

DECEMBER 2

Governor's Budget Address

JANUARY 13

Legislative Session begins
Governor's State of the State

JANUARY 14

State of the Judiciary &
State of the Tribes

JANUARY 31

Legislative Crackerbarrel

FEBRUARY 12

Rapid City Day at the Legislature

FEBRUARY 25

Crossover Day: The last day for a bill to pass out of the chamber in which it was introduced and move forward for consideration in the opposite chamber.

FEBRUARY 28

Legislative Crackerbarrel

MARCH 10

Last day for a bill or joint resolution to pass both houses

MARCH 13

Legislative Session ends

MARCH 30

Veto Day: the day reserved for the consideration of gubernatorial vetoes.



#ELEVATERAPIDCITY